



Frequently Asked Questions for Institutions That Process Education Award Payments

These questions are listed under two categories—questions related to using the online payment system *My AmeriCorps* and those of a general nature.

Questions about *My AmeriCorps*

Can more than one person at my institution have access to My AmeriCorps?

Yes. Your institution's Administrator has the ability to authorize your employees various roles that will allow them to process actions through *My AmeriCorps*. An employee could have a number of roles. The Administrator has the authority for all roles and can process all requests. Your institution can also designate more than one Administrator.

What are the various roles for an institution that processes requests through My AmeriCorps?

An *Administrator* should have the authority to assign and designate other staff to the various roles in my AmeriCorps, as well as have the authority to perform all of the role functions him or herself. An institution can designate more than one person as an Administrator.

A *Forbearance Processor* should have the authority to review and approve requests for the forbearance of qualified student loans.

An *Interest Payment Processor* should have the authority to calculate the amount of interest that accrued on a member's qualified student loan during the individual's term of AmeriCorps service or provide the daily interest rate during the period. System-generated service dates are included with all forbearance requests.

An *Education Award – Expenses Processor* should have the authority to determine the dollar amount of an education award that can be used to pay current educational expenses for a particular period of enrollment. This includes being familiar with regulations governing the relevant types of educational expenses—Cost of Attendance for degree or certificate programs and educational expenses for non-degree or GI Bill-approved educational programs.

An *Education Award – Loan Processor* should have the authority to determine the payoff amounts for qualified student loans for which a member wishes to make a payment using an education award.

How will I and or other employees assigned to roles, know when a payment request is ready for our action?

You have the choice of either receiving notifications by email or simply logging onto your account periodically to view the status of pending requests. When the person registers, there will be an option to receive emails.

Why is the system asking for enrollment start and midpoint dates when I process a payment for current educational expenses?

The legislation for the National Service Trust requires that payments for current educational expenses must be made at the beginning and middle of the enrollment period upon which the eligible amount is based. If a payment request is received after the midpoint of the enrollment period, the entire amount will be paid.

How do I get payments sent to us electronically--Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs)?

The U.S. Treasury transmits Trust payments to institutions electronically through the Automated Clearing House (ACH), an electronic network for financial transactions in the U.S. With some exceptions, the U.S. Treasury is now requiring that federal payments be disbursed electronically.

You can sign up for EFT payments by filling out Standard Form 3881, ACH VENDOR-MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT ENROLLMENT FORM, and faxing it to the Trust using this secure fax number: 202-606-3484. You can obtain a copy of this form by returning to the EFT section of the web page *How Institutions Process AmeriCorps Payments* and clicking on the link to the form.

After you have been set up for electronic payments, when a payment is sent to your institution's account at your financial institution, a notice will accompany it with the following information: where the funds came from (CNCS); last name and first name initial of the member; amount of the payment; purpose of the payment (e.g., current education expenses, loan payment, interest).

What are the security measures that cover the My AmeriCorps site?

According to OMB and NIST guidelines, electronic signatures can be achieved in a Level 2 system via verified user registration methods. OMB reveals that level 2 systems generally contain information that, if violated, would be financially harmful to an individual and cause a small degree of financial exposure to the related agency.

For the purposes of this system, we will be using a method that requires two separate steps. First, the user must identify him- or herself to the system using predetermined data elements. Second, the system will verify the individual's identity, and then require him or her to establish a username and password for subsequent reentry.

Will we have a historical record of requests that are made through the system?

Institutions will have access to historical records maintained in the Trust's database. From your Homepage, you can select "Search Requests" from the left hand

navigation bar where you can search and view past requests using a number of different fields. You will be able to print a copy of the information, if needed.

General Payment Questions

If an individual comes in with a paper "Voucher and Payment Request Form" to request a payment, what should I do?

If an individual has access to the internet, we ask that you encourage the individual to use *My AmeriCorps*, if simply for the reason that payments can be made faster, easier, and more securely.

In order to access their accounts, they need to register in the system, which should take them less than five minutes. Their registration process takes less time than yours will because the system already contains most of their required information.

In the event that registration in *My AmeriCorps* is not feasible, a paper *Voucher and Payment Request Form* or an *Interest Payment Form* can be completed and sent to the Trust for processing. All required fields must be filled in.

- The voucher is used for payments requested from an individual's education award account (to repay loans or pay for current educational expenses).
- The interest form is used for payments of the interest that accrued on qualified student while the individual was serving in an AmeriCorps program.

Instructions for completing each form were included with the forms when they were sent to the person.

The completed forms can be sent to the National Service Trust at the address listed on the form, where they will be processed.

Even though payments can be requested using paper forms, the fastest, easiest, and most secure way to process education award payments is online through *My AmeriCorps*.

How do we return funds that were sent to us?

The refund procedures are the same for both overpayments to schools (e.g., when a student drops classes) and to loan holders (e.g., when an overpayment was made for a loan).

- IF THE INSTITUTION STILL HAS THE UN-DEPOSITED U.S. TREASURY CHECK and wants to return it, send the original check to:

National Service Trust
Corporation for National and Community Service,
250 E Street, SW
Washington, 20525

- IF THE INSTITUTION HAS DEPOSITED THE U.S. TREASURY CHECK and needs to return either the entire amount or refund a portion of the payment, the school or loan holder has the option to either:

- return the funds electronically through the federal government’s website “pay.gov”. On this site, you can transfer funds from a bank account (ACH) or use a credit or debit card; or
 - issue a check from the institution’s account and mail it to CNCS.
- IF THE INSTITUTION RECEIVED THE FUNDS ELECTRONICALLY and it needs to return either the entire amount or refund a portion of the payment, the school or loan holder has the option to either:
- return the funds electronically through the federal government’s website “pay.gov”. On this site, you can transfer funds from a bank account (ACH) or use a credit or debit card; or
 - issue a check from the institution’s account and mail it to CNCS.

Some schools may not have the ability to make electronic payments based on their policies and procedures or they may prefer to make payments by check. In these cases, the school can issue its own check and mail it to the National Service Trust at the address above.

The recommended method for returning funds to the Trust is to use pay.gov.

Can I return the fund using a credit or debit card?

You can use your institution’s credit or debit card but you must do it through pay.gov.

How do I pay through pay.gov.

Pay.gov is a convenient and fast way to make secure electronic payments to Federal Government Agencies. Many common forms of payment are accepted, including credit cards, debit cards, and direct debit.

Log onto <https://www.pay.gov/>. Then, follow these steps for payment:

- 1) Click on *Find an Agency* at the top of the page.
- 2) Click the letter C.
- 3) Click on *Corporation for National and Community Service*.
- 4) In the *AmeriCorps Education Award Refunds (Trust Fund)* section, click on the **Continue to the Form** button.
- 5) Under *Accepted Payments Methods*, ► *Bank Account* ► *Debit or Credit Cards*, click on **Continue to the Form** button.
- 6) Complete the *National Service Trust Fund Refund* form, entering the institution’s and the student’s information. Click on **Continue**.
- 7) Complete the payment information form. Review the payment and account information and then **Submit** it.
- 8) At the end, pay.gov shows a confirmation for your payment. Print it. It’s your receipt until you receive one in your email, if you have chosen that option.